

1.
RELIGION

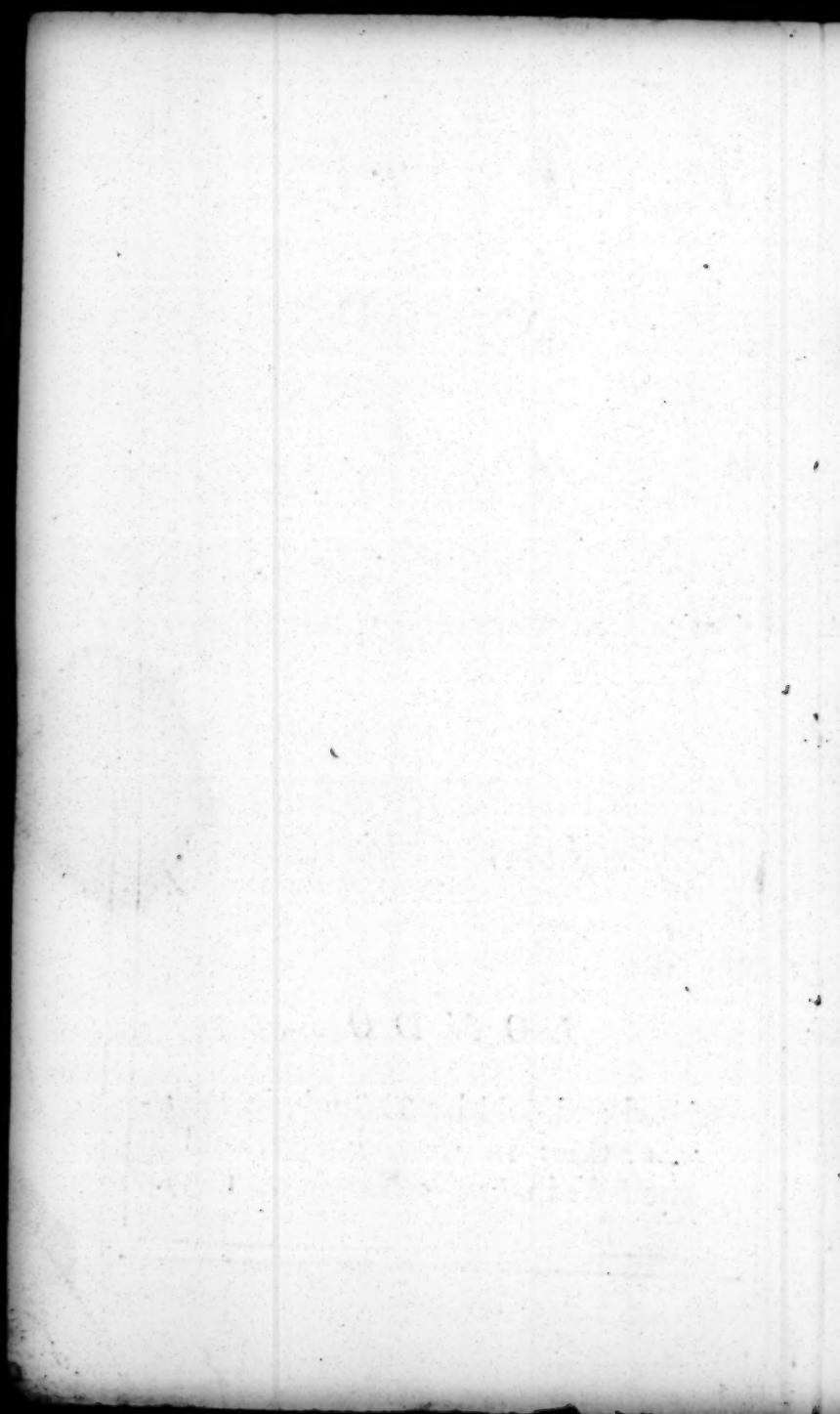
A N D

Reason
UNITED.

By a Lover of his Country.
B. C.

L O N D O N,

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P R E F A C E.

Sober Reader,

TH E Design of the following Discourse, is, an Essay to allay, if possible, the Heats and Animosities, with which one Party, or Religious Society, treats another; that if they cannot Unite in Judgment, they might, for the Ease of the Government, their own Interest, and Benefit of Posterity,

P R E F A C E.

*rity, Unite in Affection :
For as we have not all a-
like outsides neither in Shape
or Complexion, no more are
our Intellectual Conceptions.*

*And as it would be Mad-
ness to Quarrel about the first,
so it would be little less to
Persecute about the last.*

*'Tis true, the Primitive
Christians were of one Heart
and Mind, but that which
made them so, was, the
Sword of the Spirit, not of
the Magistrate: And where
that Spirit rules, it will
produce*

P R E F A C E.

*produce the like Effects ;
but without it, 'tis vanity to
think of bringing People into
such a Unity ; but much more
vain to think of Persecuting
People into it : Since 'tis
God that must Persuade Ja-
phet to dwell in the Tents
of Shem ; and till by him
Men are so Persuaded, the
Magistrate loseth his Labour
to force into that Tent or
Church, that at best is but
supposed to be the True One.*

*One thing I intreat my
Reader (viz.) That he
would*

PREFACE.

would endeavour Rather to
Re-examine his Conscience
and Education, to know
whether his Faith and Pra-
ctices are Reasonable, than
value himself upon Church
Membership.

Religion



Religion and Reason

U N I T E D.

HAD Mankind no Innate Notions of a *Deity*, or of the *Immortality of the Soul*, of a *future State of Rewards and Punishments*: 'Tis reasonable to suppose, that the greatest part would avoid troubling either their Minds or Heads about what is called *Religion*.

But this Language would be as universally heard and believed, as expressed (*viz.*) *Let us eat and drink, &c. for to morrow (there's an end of us) we must die.*

But since the contrary is most certain, and that all the Inventions of Men, and Artifices of Satan, are not able to suppress, or totally silence, those

Dreadful Alarms we are made to hear in our own Consciences; it becomes our Interest, as well as Duty, to apply our selves, with all fervency of Spirit, to such a Course of Life as may *first* free us from that Perturbation of Mind, which infallibly is (sooner or later) entail'd on an Evil Conscience: And *secondly*, obtain the assurance of a Lot in that future Peace, Kingdom and Glory, that shall have no end.

Religion then is that Science, which perfectly to Understand and Practise, is the only means for accomplishing the aforesaid end (*viz.*) quiet the Conscience here, and assure the Soul of Blessedness hereafter.

True it is, the Word hath often been abused, and the intent of it not seldom mistaken; yea, to that degree, that what God designed in it (who is Just and Reasonable in all his ways) for an universal Advantage to Mankind, hath been engross'd, and made the property of a Party, who have been so far from Converting and Curing of Souls by it, that it hath not
 failed

failed of being the greatest Stumbling to those that have taken reasonable ways to save their own.

And this hath chiefly sprung from two Roots: The First is, the Immorality of those pretended Doctors, whose pernicious Example have had this effect, either to make the Observer conclude, there is no such thing as *Religion* in the World, but that talking of it is only a Political Contrivance to subject the People, that they may be the more unlike to give their Superiours trouble in Governing them.

Or else that this Doctor is but a meer *Quack*, who prates about Religion no otherwise in earnest than to get Money by it; which, what a vast Prejudice that is to the Cause of Religion in general, is not hard to determine. For if he that seems devoted to Religion, gives no better Proofs of the *Power* and *Vertue* of it, than only to Talk of Curing others, whilst his own Distemper is so notorious, no Marvel if others that are Afflicted despise

spise both the Man and the Means ; the last as defective, as the first a meer fopp — Thinking Men, who have the use of their Senses, and believe the Service of God to be Reasonable, as well as Religious, are of the Judgment, That 'tis impossible for the Design of Religion to be answered, until by a Purge of the Law, these Blasphemers of God and Religion, and Profaners of all that is Sacred, be totally ejected ; and a Bar set at the Church Doors, to prohibit every such Person from taking the Name of the Holy God, or his Religion in their Mouths, under any such Character.

And that this seems to fall under the Magistrates Observation and Correction, as well as Cure, is not hard to prove : For, if *God will not hold him guiltless that takes his Name in vain ;* ought not the Magistrate, who is God's Minister of Justice, look to it, that none pass his Stamp of Approbation, that are so absolutely Excepted against in the Declared Law of him, the Magistrate Represents ?

For

For if God saith, *I will not hold him Guiltless that taketh my Name in vain*: And the Magistrate saith otherwise; what account can he give of his Trust and Stewardship? — And if he that is an Immoral Ecclesiastick, don't take the Name of God in vain, in the worst sense, pray what is the Sin and Guilt? Indeed there is one case in which it is not in vain, and that is the same with the common Beggars, (*viz.*) To get Money, whose Prayers and Blessings are the same Minute turn'd into Curses, and their Light into Profound Darkness, if no Oil appears to continue the Lamp.

But to proceed, if Men of Immoral Conversations shall be admitted (or connived at) by the Magistrate, to be Pastors over the People, to feed them with Holy Food, 'tis certain, that in a little time, *Religion* will be wholly lost; and the *People* starved, instead of being fed; and destroyed, instead of being saved; for how is it possible for him to feed a Flock that never had ought to feed them withal?

And

And that the Immoralist hath nothing to feed them withal, that is good, is evident; since himself to all goodness is a Reprobate.

Again, no Man can lead another farther than he goes himself; but how far the Immoralist is gone in the Way of God, is not to be disputed. Again, the Blind are *fit* to be leaders to none; and none but those that are *so* with a witness can esteem them fit for it: But if *such will* follow them, our Saviour tells us where the end of their Journey will be. But who is a Blinder Creature than the Immoralist? However none but the reverse to him can see God.

Therefore they that would go to God must have better Leaders, or else they can never come to him.

The Second is *Ambition*, it is a Passion that, like *Pharaoh's* lean Kine, devours all that comes in the way of it, and is nevertheless as hungry and ill-favoured at last as at first: That Kingdom or Common-Wealth that is infected with store of this sort of Cattle, shall

shall never be at rest long, unless they have the liberty to Gore those themselves have voted Heterodox, and to furnish them with Tools to do it, *Cum Privilegio*. Nothing like Interweaving themselves with the State: So that the Civil Magistrate shall be made believe, 'tis his Duty and Interest always, either to confer more Honours and Profits on them, or else to suppress their more vertuous Neighbours, under the Notion of their being Hereticks; which is not the least Prejudice to Religion in general, as well as it is not seldom the like to the State; since the common People are more inclinable to favour and unite with the Sufferer, than joyn with the Persecutor, Suffering (generally speaking) rather making Profelytes, than answering the end of the Persecutor; especially where the Sufferer has the answer of a better Conscience than the Persecutor, which not seldom is the privilege of Dissent. But if Vertuous Living under a Dissent from a National Church Liturgy be interpreted Irreligious, and renders the Professors Obnoxious

noxious to the Laws, whilst Immorality goes unpunished: How is it possible that the Interest of Religion can be advanced, since the Sufferings that attend a vertuous Man is greater than what falls upon the Irreligious and Profane? Which shews, that whatever Pretences are made for Religion, the Practice is unreasonable; and therefore is no longer held for Truth than whilst the Rod obligeth the Fearful and Cowardly to say *Amen*, contrary to the Perswasion of their own Minds.

But three things are the design of the Ambitious *Clergy-Men* (*viz.*) *Wealth, Honour and Power*; all which renders Religion the more doubtful and unreasonable: Since neither was the mark that the best Example that ever was in the World aim'd at, but his Doctrine and Practice the reverse to it all. And that they can be his Followers and Disciples, and thus apparently contradict both his Doctrine and Practice, is unreasonable to believe. And therefore that Church that will indulge Ambition in her *Clergy*, is as
remote

remote from the Basis of true Religion, as she that Connives at Immorality; and *both*, the reasonable part of Mankind must conclude to be a great way off from Truth, and consequently Irreligious and Unreasonable. Nor can it be thought reasonable, that ever the Civil Magistrate should be able to allay those evil Spirits, that such Ambitious Men are able to raise from the contrary Winds of Doctrine, that will inevitably blow in a National Church, which will make more work for the Magistrate to reconcile, than he is capable of performing, as many Instances might be brought for Proof. Besides, till they all speak one and the same thing at home, 'tis unreasonable to think, that Dissenters should return to that Church which is not in Unity with it self.

But again, an Ambitious *Clergy* cannot bear contradiction: And therefore when what they have stamp'd with the Seal of Orthodox meets with a Non-reception, the Sword of the Magistrate must be employed to force its entrance;

entrance ; which is so much the more Irreligious, for that it is so unreasonable.

Since 'tis reasonable Arguments, and not Blows, that must Convince the Understanding ; and till the *Clergy* can furnish themselves therewith, they are never like to be free from Dissenters.

But if their Ambition will admit of no Competitor (as most certain it will not) nothing but Persecution can follow their Venemous Doctrine, where the Magistrate is become more a Party than the common Father of the People. Which, that he may not, is the humble Request of all his Dissenting Children ; that though he hath an Eldest Son, he may not, to Gratifie his Ambition, destroy the rest from enjoying their Natural Birth-right. In short, to make an Image, and then by the help of the Civil Magistrate, oblige every body to fall down and Worship, upon pain of Corporal and Pecuniary Punishment, is what hath produced so much Irreligion, &c. in the World, and frustrated the design of Religion in general,

general, as well as been a Stumbling Block in the way of those Seekers that would extreemly rejoyce to find the way that leads to Everlasting Blessedness, (obscured by the Dust the Immoral and Ambitious *Clergy* have raised) which tho' they, *viz.* the common People, know but little; yet know so much, that Immorality and Ambition is never the way to it:

These things being premised, the following Considerations are *Candidly Offered* to the Serious Thoughts of the Impartial, for Cure of our present Maladies, that the just and reasonable design of Religion may be answered; that God may be glorified, our Consciences eased, and Souls saved: That the Government may be freed from unnecessary Trouble, and the People enjoy perfect Tranquility.

First, That it's not Opinion, but Holiness is the design of *Religion*.

B

Secondly;

Secondly, That the Principles that lead to it are few, reasonable and plain.

Thirdly, That making of *Creeds*, not to be found in Holy Scripture, is at best but Imaginary, and therefore not to be bowed unto.

Fourthly, That Liberty of Conscience is every Man's Birth-right, and that it cannot be invaded, without violating the Laws of the Land.

Fifthly, That Morality may be encouraged, since it is so great a part of Religion, that without it none can be Religious.

1st. That it is *not* Opinion, but Holiness is the design of Religion.

It was the Condition of the great Charter, granted to him that was the Patriarch of the Church, before the Law, on Tables of Stone, was given to his numerous Posterity (see *Gen. 15. 1.* compare with *Gen. 17. 1.*) **walk thou before**

before me, and be thou Perfect, &c.
 No written Law now, consequently
 no Creeds; yet the *Law written in the*
Heart was *Abraham's Rule*, by which
 he was to walk before God to Per-
 fection.

Again, *If without Ho-
 linefs no Man can fee God,* Heb. 12. 14.
 without Holinefs no Man
 can walk with him: But the first is
 true, therefore the laft. For want of
 it the old World was destroyed; be-
 cause of it (and not untelligible *Creeds*)
Noah was saved, Gen. 6. 9.

The Tenor of the Covenant in *Ho-
 reb* centered in it (*viz.*) to Implant
Love and *Fear* in the People to God-
 ward, that thereby they might be
 kept from Sin, (*Exod.* 20. 20. compare
 with *Deut.* 30.) but what that Dis-
 pensation began the Gospel finisheth;
 what that pointed out in Types and
 Shadows, the Gospel Substantially and
 Radically compleateth: Which is to
 give *Power* to do, as well as *Light* to
 know, what the good and acceptable
 Will of God is: Since on the *knowing*

and *doing* thereof our present and future Happiness depends; and this is as it must be the *only* design of true Religion.

Again, Let us consider what the Institutor of the *Christian Religion* saith hereupon (Mat. 7. 21.) *It is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, but he that doth the Will of my Father, that shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven: From which we are to take notice,*

1. That acknowledgments to unquestionable Truths (such as calling him *Lord*, that is the unquestionable Lord and God, and praying to him as the only Lord and Saviour) doth not entitle Men to the Kingdom.

2. But *doing* the Will of God, is, *not only prefer'd* to the acknowledgment of him as Lord, but made the *only Condition*, upon which admittance into the Kingdom is granted. And in the next verie he adds, *For many* (saith he) *will say to me, have we not Prophesied in thy Name, and cast out Devils, and done mighty Works* (Perhaps Built Churches, Hospitals, &c.) *in thy*
Name,

Name, &c. All which was not done by *Infidels*, but by them whose Judgments and understandings (as well as Opinions) were strong concerning the verity of his Authority; yet for all this *Knowledge* and *Profession*, and at some times Enjoyment, *Depart from me, &c.* was the Sentence, grounded upon their evil works; for tho' they knew much, and professed much, and enjoyed much too, yet they were unholy; hearers, and not doers; knowers of *his* Will, but doers of their *own*; and therefore shut out of the Kingdom.

Thus much from Christ himself, in Vindication of the First Proposition: Next, let us hear what *His* Apostle (as well as the Gentiles) saith to the matter in hand, see 1 Cor. 13. where he tells of Gifts, as **Prophecies, Tongues, Knowledge of all Mysteries, Hospitality towards the Poor, and Faith to Remove Mountains**; yea, to lay down Life for Opinions sake; yet all this (he saith) without Charity (or Divine Love) is but an empty Sound, &c. I

hope my Authority is so far Unquestionable, that I need seek for no farther Proof for my Assertion, (*viz.*) That 'tis *not* Opinion, but Holiness was and is the design of Religion; for without it, Religion is no more than a Body without Breath or Spirit, which will soon Putrifie, to the anoyance of all that are near it.

Now if Holiness of Life was the universal Creed of all the Christian World, and the Hearts and Heads of Men were as much taken up with thinking how they might Practise it, as their Hearts and Heads are full of Matters of far less Moment (I will not say what, though all the Presses in *Europe* has been filled with it, as well as many Goals crowded, Goods spoiled, and Lives lost about it) it would be a happy day for us.

But that I may be plainly understood, I add, that by *Holiness* I mean such a Strict, Aweful and Circumspect Life, as with Detestation and Abhorrence, shuns those Paths that leads to the Breach of Negative Precepts, as well

well as with fervency of Spirit, suitable to the Nobility of the cause, is Studious to approve it self in the Performance of what is enjoyed to be *done*, by the same Authority; the other, as above, is *forbidden*; and in short is no other than a Life conformed to the Will of God.

And that this is the great Design of *Religion*, is reasonable to believe, both from Reason it self, Scripture and Divine Inspiration; and he that so lives deserves the Protection of all Civil Governments, being the best of Subjects; for he never gives the Magistrate trouble: Since he that bears the Sword, is, *for a Praise to them that do well*, and is only a *Terror to Evil Doers*, which such a Man is not. From what hath hitherto been said, these Considerations will naturally follow.

First, That he that made us Holy and Good at first, and put us in a Capacity so to continue, and sent his Son to *break our Bonds* by *his* Death, desires that out of our Laps'd State we

may be Restored, to Live in a perfect Union and Fellowship with him again, to all Eternity, *Ezek. 18. 32. and 33. 11. Rom. 5. 18, 19. 1 Tim. 1. 15. and 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. Titus 2. 14. 1 John 3. 7.*

Secondly, Nevertheless, without doing his Will, 'tis impossible to enjoy that Union and Peace, &c. *Mat. 7. 21, 22.*

Thirdly, That his Will is our Sanctification or Holiness, *Luke 1. 74, 75. 1 Theff. 3. 13. and 4. 3. Rom. 6. 19, 22. 2 Cor. 7. 1.*

Fourthly, That he which hath ordained the End, hath also provided the means, *Deut. 18. 15. Ezek. 18. 32. 1 Tim. 1. 15.*

Fifthly, That that means is Primarily the *Second Adam*, or *Lord from Heaven*, by whom the universal Gift of Grace is bestowed on all Men; prejudiced by the Fall of the *First Adam*, Secondly by the Holy Scripture, and

and a Spiritual Ministry, &c. *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. *Tit.* 2. 11. *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12.

Sixthly and Lastly, This Gift so universally given, is *Grace* for *Grace*, *Light* for *Light*, *Spirit* for *Spirit*, to Spirit or Quicken us to Holiness, and is as much the Common Privilege of all Men, as all Men were damaged by *Adam's* Fall. (*Luke* 2. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. *John* 1. 9, 16. *1 Cor.* 12. 7.) And, if so there is no Reason for the *Church of Rome*, or any other *Church*, to impose Articles of Faith on others, or Monopolize, Religion or Truth to themselves; since he that Lives conformable to this Gift, is a Member of that Church that Jesus Christ is Head of: And he that hath Faith herein, hath the *True Faith* mentioned in the 10th of the *Hebrews*; and is that Faith delivered to the Saints, for which they are to contend (but not Fight nor Persecute, since the way of their contending for it was by Argument and Suffering, and not Persecution) according as the Apostle saith, *Gal.* 5. 14. *The fulfilling of the whole Law,*
is

is in Loving our Neighbour as our selves. And vers. 6. saith, *Circumcision nor Uncircumcision availeth nothing, but Faith that worketh by Love*: But Creed making Works not by Love, but Strife and Envy, and is almost always followed by Persecution; therefore not of the true Faith, (tho' made up of never so true words) but is a Fruit of the Flesh, (vers. 19, 20, 21.) and such Persecute those Born of the Spirit, Gal. 4. 29. In short, that Faith which works by Love, is the Immediate Gift of God, that enables Man wholly to trust or depend (without any manner of doubt, with respect to his Body as well as Soul) on the Invisible God; but such an intire Trust and Depending cannot be where Purity of Heart is not: And a Thousand Articles of Faith will not make one Heart clean, it being made *so only* by that Spirit or Gift abovesaid: So that he which hath the true Faith is not without the true Love, (for they are inseparable) which worketh (like Leaven) every Man into Humility, Patience, and all other Vertues;

Vertues; and against such there is no legal Law: But to bring forth contrary Fruit (such as Immorality; Ambition, Envy, Wrath, Persecution, &c.) as it is no part of the Christian Religion, so it is very unreasonable to number any such among the Religious. Thus, I hope, I have made it plainly appear, That 'tis not *Opinion*, but *Holiness* that answers the design of Religion.

2dly, That the Principles which leads to Holiness are *few, plain and reasonable*; and consequently all that are not so (or from unquestionable Authority, such as is the Holy Scripture) may be rejected without censure: Since what is not of Faith (in Point of Principles and Doctrine) is Sin; and since we are warned not to suffer Sin to lie on a Brother (much more are we forbid to force him in to it.)

But to proceed, that there is a *Supreme Being* from which we derive *ours*, and by which we are upheld
and

and protected, is undeniable; that we are under strong Obligations, both of Gratitude, Duty and Interest, to pay Worship, Obedience, &c. To this Supreme Authority, is likewise unquestionable; that a defect in Performance hereof renders us Culpable; and that a Violation of his Laws is of that Provoking Nature, that Justice cannot remit; this we plainly saw verified in the Persons of our first Parents, who were not only defective in their positive Duty, but precipitated themselves into a Violation of that Negative Command their God gave them; which Transgression cost them Dear (*viz.* Loss of Paradise) as the just Recompence of their Disobedience: Nevertheless when Justice had thus punished for Sin, Mercy was ready to commiserate; when Justice had wounded, Mercy was for healing: Thus he that was Infinite in Justice, was as Infinite in Mercy, by promising and giving that *Seed*, which should *bruise the Head* of him that had broken off poor Man from the true Root and Foundation
of

of his Happiness ; and by the Operation thereof was he restored, made whole, and united to his Sovereign Lord again.

And this Seed *Solomon* calls *Wisdom*, through which (saith he) *Men were saved, and Adam restored out of his Fall*, *Wisd. 10. 1.* This *Wisdom* or *Seed* was no sooner promised, but gave, Inwardly and Spiritually (though not outwardly 'till the fullness of time, that *Jesus Christ* was born of the *Virgin*) and hereof all good Men, through every Generation, partook, and were made so by the Power and Vertue thereof: *But when the unrighteous went away from her* (and would not be govern'd thereby) *in his anger he perished, wherewith, he murdered his Brother*, *vers. 3.* Here was and is the Original of all Persecution about Religion ever since : For by going from her, Men lose that Allegiance and Duty that is incumbent on them, by which they first make themselves Enemies to God ; secondly to *Jesus Christ*, to whom all
Power

Power in Heaven and Earth is committed, that he by his Authority might subject them to himself in Righteousness, Holiness and Truth: And Lastly, by their Pride and Ambition, Enemies to one another.

And this is likewise the true Reason there are so many *Lo-heres* and *Lo-theres* in the World, and so much *Irreligion*, *Unreasonableness*, *Immorality* and *Hypocrisie*, as there is. Nor can we reasonably expect it otherwise, till Men come to that Principle in themselves, that will subject them to their Maker and Redeemer. And then, as a Natural Consequence, will there be true Love and Peace one towards another.

Now, as was said in the beginning of this Discourse, we are not left without a Witness (*viz.*) We are not left to our selves, nor without some sense of a God, nor of the Obligations we are under to him, according to Holy Writ; compare *Mal.* 3. 5. with *Acts* 14. 17. And this Witness will be faithful to us, as well to Testifie against,
as

as for us, according to our Deeds, &c. therefore call'd the *Faithful and True Witness*, Accusing or Excusing us, *Rom. 2. 15. Rev. 1. 5.* This is the Law written by the Finger of God in the Heart of Man.

This is the Divine *Logos*, that speaks to and in the Soul, in which is hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; *It is the true Light that enlightheth every Man that cometh into the World*: It is the Inspeaking Voice that saith, *This is the Way, walk in it, Isaiah.* — It is to the World of Souls as the Sun in the Firmament is to Bodies, gives Light, and causeth Production.

It is the Inward and Spiritual Appearance of the promised Seed, that *Bruiseth the Head of the Serpent*, within us, as it did outwardly in that Blessed Person (*viz.*) *Jesus Christ*, when he Triumphed over him in our Natures; for in him the Fulness was, but in us by Measure, every one according to the good Pleasure of God.

Finally

Finally, this is that **One Universal Principle** (tho' express'd after many and by different Names) of Light and Life, which Impowers that Soul that receives it in perfect Love) for its Guide and Monitor, To **fulfil God's Holy Will, which is our Holiness**. And as he that resists it, incurs Damnation; so he that **Conforms** to her Divine Instruction, will not fail of obtaining an Assurance of that Incorruptible Crown of Blessedness, which God the Righteous Judge freely bestows on every such Believing and Subject Soul, 2 Tim. 4. 8.

By this time, I hope I have made good my Second Assertion, (*viz.*) *That the Principles that leads to Holiness are not many, nor perplexing the Brains or Understanding, but plain and familiar, and answers the reasonable part of Mankind*: Since in it is nothing above the Reach of Right Reason to comprehend, as in it is nothing below what is Essential to our Peace and Happiness here, and Blessedness hereafter.

3dly. Since then it plainly appears, the Religion of God's Making is not such a *Mysterium Magnum*, as by some Persons it hath been Represented, for what Reason I will not say, (though 'tis not hard to guess:) I say, since Religion has so much Reason in it, and carries such clear Demonstration with it; the making so many Tedi-ous Unintelligible, as well as Unrea-sonable Articles of Faith, with this *Anathema* at the Tail of them, (*viz.*) *Without which 'tis impossible for a Man to be saved*, has been a vast Prejudice to the credit of Religion in general; tho' it hath gratified a Party, whose Conscien-ces are stretch'd so wide, that nothing that has the appearance of Profit or Honour will make them Keck: Yet at the same time, the Man of Religion Indeed, who makes Conscience both of his Words and Works, chooseth rather to Suffer both Reproach and Persecution, than Subscribe to what he cannot understand.

C

I can-

I cannot forbear thinking, that most Religious People know, there are many Points of Divinity which are most certainly *Believed*; yet perhaps are rarely exprest: And he that Believes them, has the advantage and benefit of his *Own Faith*, by his so having it to himself, which ought not therefore to be imposed on another; since all Truths, profitable for us to know, are not seen at once: Nor are all Men a-like capable of understanding them.

Besides the common Prejudice of Education should be considered: And therefore to dismember Persons from the Church, purely for Errors they *cannot* help, is very hard: But to Unchristian them, because they cannot Subscribe what they *do not know*, nor are able to comprehend, and which their Adversaries have *only Conjectures* about, is so Barbarous, Irreligious and Unreasonable, that words are too short to set it forth.

But

But in my Opinion, nothing can be more reasonable, or tend more to the Promotion of Religion in general, than for all Parties in Conjunction with the Civil Magistrate, to make that the Creed of all Perswasions, which all Perswasions agree is *Sacred*, and of Divine Authority; to wit, the *Holy Scriptures*: And where any Difference shall arise about the Interpretation thereof, the Civil Authority should Interpose, to Oblige all Parties to *Unite in Interest* (*viz.*) the *Peace and Prosperity* of the Nation; if he could not Oblige them to *Unite in Charity*, the Christian and Religious Bottom. The First, the Magistrate hath Power to command: The Latter, if we are true Christians, cannot be denied.

But where either Party which is uppermost (for the Wheel goes round) shall exercise their Power, *first* to exalt themselves in Honour and Wealth upon the *Credit* of Religion; and *secondly*, abuse that Power to make Traps for their Neighbours, by cram-

ming Creeds down their Throats, which cannot be understood by them, and which the others have no Authority from Holy Scripture to impose: Most certain it is; As it is to turn Persecutors for Religion, when Religion it self forbids it, and is in it self both Unreasonable and Irreligious; so it is of that Provoking Nature, that will inevitably draw down God's Righteous Judgments, to the Desolation of that Kingdom, or Common-Wealth, where such Methods are taken, and finally prove the overthrow of that Church which promotes such a Work. But without looking for a Stroke from the Hand of Heaven, 'tis no good Policy; since 'tis the first Foundation to Schism.

For had not the Church of *Rome* imposed more than she had Authority from Holy Scripture for; the *Protestants* could have had no reasonable Colour for their Revolt; but the first is true, and so is the last.

Again,

Again, had the Church of *England* imposed no more than the Holy Scripture had warranted Her in Matters of Faith ; nor any Discipline, but what might reasonably be Collected from them : Nor any other Practices by her *Clergy* than what was Honest, Just, and of Good Report, as becomes Ministers of Jesus Christ ; the *Dissenters* Separation had been a Ridiculous Thing. Whereas it appears now to be so Grounded, that the Strength of the Church is not able to Convince nor Confute them.

In short, if the 39 *Articles* were not half so many as they are, and more clear than some of them appear to be. And if the *Creed*, commonly called *Athanasius's*, were reduced to that of the *Apostle's*, or *Nicene-Creed* ; which as they are less Perplexing, so they are as Substantial, and would engage more to unite in the Truth thereof, who are now too often rather Stumbled, than Excited to be Religious : It would tend more to Peace, if not Unity.

Again, if the *Presbyterians Assembly of Divinity* had not made such a horrid Blunder, in their *Westminster Confession of Faith*, as they did, by Asserting such and such Principles for Orthodox, with pretended Authority, from Holy Scripture, which, upon Examination, no more answered their design, than the first of *Job* proves the Divinity of Christ; they might at that time have enlarged their Dominion, and, like the *Jews*, made *Profelytes of the Covenant* in abundance: But when People see, *first*, an Arbitrary Power to impose; and, *secondly*, so much weakness in their Proofs, no marvel if they were left also, as they left others.

Nor had the Synod of *Dort* any better success, especially in *Holland*, where the Remedy prov'd worse than the Disease. Nor was *England* free from the dire Effects thereof: But as *W. P's Address to Protestants*, pag. 62, and 63. faithfully The mournfullest part of that History is the ill Usage the Bishop of *Landaff* and others had, who were

acknowledg

ably acknowledged to be found in the
 Faith of those Times (*viz.* the Cal-
 on, *venist*) yet, if at any time they ap-
 peared Moderate in Behaviour, and
 Gentle in their Words; desiring ra-
 ther an Accommodation with the Re-
 monstrators, than to encrease the Dif-
 ference to the Prejudice of Religion in
 the general; *Gomarus* and his Followers,
 had not observing the Rules of Debate in
 so grave an Assembly, fell foul of the
 Bishop, &c. Reproaching their Ten-
 derness, and insinuating the Charge of
Treachery, &c. against those more Ver-
 tuous, but less Bitter and Stingy Per-
 sons than themselves.

But without Raking in the Ruins
 of time, 'tis evident, that the several
 Councils, Convocations, Synods, &c.
 that have been called to settle *Articles*
of Faith, have rarely avoided Exerci-
 sing such a Dogmatical Power, to the
 straining the Principles of Religion,
 beyond, not only the Line of Holy
 Scripture, but the Staple of Reason
 and common Sense: And therefore no

wonder if the World be filled with Schisms. In days of old, the Ancient Land-Marks were not to be removed without a severe Penalty ; and most certain it is, neither wider nor streighter must we set them, than the Holy Met of old did, unless by the same Authority they had : And how that was, the Holy Scripture plainly demonstrates.

And until *That* be our general Creed without far-fetch'd Consequences, we cannot reasonably expect to be free from the trouble that attends, what is called, *Schism* ; and where that is Persecution commonly follows ; for Non-conformity, though it be but to an Image, and not the true God : And what a Prejudice that is to the State to be torn in pieces by Factions, woful Experience hath taught us. This with the Immorality and Ambition of the *Clergy* in King *James* the First Time, laid the Foundation for the Ruin of his Son, and with him Three Kingdoms, according to *F. O.* in his Observations on K. *J's* Reign : “ Our
 “ Divine

“ Divines (saith he) for the general-
 “ ty, did Sacrifice more to *Bacchus* than
 “ *Minerva*.

“ Again, nor did the notorious De-
 “ bauchery of the *Episcopal Clergy* add
 “ a little to the Rent, (made by those
 “ called *Puritans*.)

“ Nor did the sudden Translations
 “ of Bishops, from less to greater
 “ Fees, give time to visit sufficiently
 “ their respective Charges; being
 “ more intent upon the Receipt of
 “ such Taxes, as a long abused Custom
 “ had Estated them in, than upon
 “ Reformation: For from the Pul-
 “ pit came all our future Miseries;
 “ God not being served there as he
 “ ought, &c.

I take the more notice of this, be-
 cause himself was no favourer of *Puri-
 tanism*, but of the other side.

For the Security therefore of the Go-
 vernment, Ease of the Magistrate, and
 Peace of the People, *Creeeds* not to be
 found in Holy Scripture, and an Ambiti-
 ous and Immoral Clergy, by the common

Voice

Voice of Mankind, should be totally Rejected.

Which leads me to my Fourth Proposition (viz.) *That Liberty of Conscience is every Man's Birth-right.*

4thly, By Liberty of Conscience, is not meant a Liberty to Licentiousness; for no Man that is *Compos Mentis*, will pretend Matter of Conscience to commit Wickedness. But by Liberty of Conscience, I mean, for every Man to go to what place he please to worship God, in that way he is persuaded is the Right Way, and to hear that Preacher that he likes best. As for Instance, I cannot see any Prejudice to the State to Indulge the *Jews* in the Exercise of their Religion; which, of all Perswasions, has the least Reason to desire or expect it; yet, we find *our* Superiours have thought fit to indulge them *already*, as well as *other States* do; for they rarely suffer for their Religion: Perhaps 'tis because the Blessing that attends Sufferers is
none

none of their Portion. However, if
 they Sin against their own Knowledge
 (but we cannot say they do) they
 will suffer for it, from his Hand that
 knows their Hearts: But if they know
 no better, 'tis unreasonable to Punish
 Men for what they cannot help.
 Therefore their Synagogues, provided
 they do nothing against the State, can
 be no Prejudice to the Government.
 Nor can the Worshipping Images,
 Praying to Saints, Auricular Confession,
 Pilgrimages, &c. hurt the State; pro-
 vided those that have the vanity to
 think such things their Duty, may
 appear Publickly to perform it. But
 if they are deprived thereof, no oppor-
 tunity will be neglected to get that
 by stealth; the Omission of which
 they firmly believe cannot be forgiven
 them: And when such Persons get
 together in that manner, they are not
 only Incouraged to continue *that* Pra-
 ctice, but are Warmed with a Belief,
 that these Rugged Paths are the only
 Way to Glory; and therefore in time
 will

will be so inured to it, that they will bid Defiance even to Death it self; which not seldom is the most effectual Way to increase, and not suppress any Faction.

Add to this the *Desperateness* of those who are made so; first, upon the Score of their Suffering for Religion; but now turn'd to *Conspire* the Destruction of that Power, by which they are oppress'd. Here it is Plots are laid, the design of which is to render Vengeance on those that have not remembered Mercy, and to ease themselves from Suffering. But let Men have Ease, and they will not Plot the destruction of that Power that they owe their Ease and Safety to. But where they, or any other, shall abuse this Liberty, (which is their Right peaceably to enjoy) to the Prejudice of another in Person or Estate, the Magistrate, as the common Father of the People, hath Power to Interpose, and give that Correction to the delinquent, as is his just Demerit: To which every
Party,

Party, except the Guilty, will say
Amen.

That the *Episcopalian* should be Persecuted, because the first Reform from Popery was to Presbitery, is so unreasonable, that nothing of Religion is to be seen in it, unless you will call a Mad Firy Zeal Religion. The Dismal and Tragical Story we have upon Record, of the Madness of that People, since the last Revolution in *Scotland*, as well as in the unhappy Civil Wars at home in *England*, are so many, and so black, that it becomes highly necessary, that the *Episcopalian*, who is now the National Church in *England*, lay a good Foundation for time to come: Since what hath been, may be. For no Man in his Senses can think a Church governed by Bishops is such a Heresie as deserves that Evil Treatment they have had for that only Reason: Nor are the 39 *Articles* so Remote from Christianity, nor the Discipline of the Church of *England* so void of Defence,
that

that for believing the one, and practising the other, they should be exposed to Sufferings, when the Government is in other Hands: Let the Errors be what they will, they hold or profess, (since no Body but themselves are the worse for them) 'tis Unreasonable and Irreligious for the *Presbyterian* to Persecute them, as now in *Scotland*.

Nor can it be thought Reasonable or Religious, that the *Presbyterian* and *Independent*, &c. should be obliged to go to hear *Common-Prayer*, when themselves, in their own Opinion, have a more Lively Way of Worship. And if the Elders of those Churches take the same Care, that a Bishop in the Church of *England* is obliged to, (*viz.*) See that the Ministers feed the Flock with good Doctrines, tending to Holiness of Life, and Peace amongst Men, and good Examples: What Reason hath the Church of *England* to be angry, because they do not go all to one place, since both aim at one thing (*viz.*) The Promotion of Religion,

ligion in General, and the Peace of the Common-Wealth?

Again, What harm can the *Antibaptist*, by his Water-Dispensation, do? He may, by his zealous and strict Living, and laborious Preaching, Influence many to the reforming their Lives and Manners; if not, to the thorough Renovation of their Mind: Nor can his reclusive private Life be any Prejudice to the State, since there are Hands enough besides to be employed. If he has any Principles that are either Inconsistent with Religion or Government, so long as he keeps them to himself, no Body is the worse for them besides himself: But when it appears otherwise, 'tis time enough then to punish: For 'tis both Irreligious and Unreasonable to punish Men for what we only suppose they will do.

Nor can the *Quaker* be left as a Sacrifice to any other Party with Reason or Religion, because of his Singularity; since he pretends as much
Conscience

Conscience as any of the rest, and ventures to come to the Text of Holy Scripture with the most Orthodox: But let his Errors be what they will (for 'tis our Unhappiness, that we are too apt to think too well of our own, and too meanly of our Neighbours) notwithstanding his Hat lies in the way, we never found him to give the Magistrate any Trouble, unless it was when forc'd before him, about his Religion, which he cannot help: If he is mistaken, none will suffer for that mistake but himself: And he is assured also, that one mistake is not like to be corrected by another. But all those he hath separated from, dare not pretend to be free from Mistakes, even in the best part of their Religion: And since the highest is upon Supposition and Conjecture, 'tis the more unreasonable to oblige Conformity. But that the *Quaker* is for promotion of the design of Religion (*viz.*) *Holiness* is undeniable; if he carries it too far, 'tis an Error of
of

of the Right Hand, and his Zeal ought to be cherish'd by the common Father of the People; since all his Proselytes ease the Magistrate of that trouble, People of greater Liberty bring upon him.

Add to this his Industry; for as upon the Principles of Religion he is prohibited the Diversions of Humane Life, which others esteem Lawful; so 'tis certain the Mind of Man must be diverted with something: And therefore he, by turning *Quaker*, turneth the Stream of his Diversion to good Husbandry, as Planting, Improving Land, keeping the Poor at work, &c. And for Trade, 'tis demonstrable, beyond Contradiction, that he is not one of the least, or most useless, both in City and Country: Nor is he one of the least Benefactors to the Government.

Let every Man then be encouraged
to Sow, to Plant, to learn Trades, to
D improve

improve his Stock and Capacity for his Own, for his Posterity's, and for the Nation's Good, by an intire Liberty of Conscience, that no Man may suffer in Body or Estate, for the Errors, or supposed Errors of his Mind, and that only in things relating to another World: And so shall the Civil Magistrate have great Peace, and the People have that Tranquillity that attends sitting *Under their own Vine where none can make them afraid.*

To Conclude, he that is Born Heir to an Estate, is not Heir because he is of such a Church, but because he is his Father's Son: And if his Inclination, Education or Judgment, lead him out of the national Road to work out his own Salvation, 'tis very unreasonable as well as contrary to the Fundamental Laws of the Land, that he should therefore loose his Birth-right.

And

And indeed great pitty it is, that all parties are not hearty herein ; for none knows but that those that are otherwise minded, are making Rods for Themselves or Posterity, to be whipt withal. But leave Conscience Un-cramp'd ; and by this means, the Civil Magistrate will always be Umpire between the several Parties that are under his Government ; for as he protects all, so all will fly to him as to their Common Sanctuary, where the Laws will decide all Controversies, or Disputes, that may arise. And if the Civil Authority is pleased to make one Party as the Eldest Son ; that Elder may not have Power to spoil the Younger. For this Reason I Conceive with Submission, that *Holland* has given us an Excellent Example ; in which, tho' they have no National Church, yet the Magistrate gives a preference as he pleaseth, and therefore takes care to maintain what he so prefers, out of the Common Stock, which is a Just and

Reasonable way, and by that means all Parties contribute to the upholding what the Magistrate is willing to prefer; and here is no Imposition upon those that do not think, as the Magistrate thinks, nor is *A. B.* compell'd to pay *B. C.* for what *A. B.* thinks were better let alone; But *A. B.* is obliged to render to *Cesar*, what is *Cesar's* (*viz.*) Taxes, Tribute, &c. and if *Cesar* will out of that Common Stock, maintain that Man or Ministry that he prefers, he ought not to be disobeyed; for there are perhaps many Thousands of People under his Care, who have not the Discretion, no more than Children, to choose for themselves.

And therefore 'tis but reasonable, the Magistrate should provide for them that labour to Instruct the People in Religion and good Manners, over whom, in chief, the Magistrate himself is over-seer.

5thly, That Morality may be encouraged, since it is so great a part of Religion, that without it none can be Religious.

Were the foregoing Propositions well considered, there would be the less need to say much upon this Head, since it would be for the most part *actum agere*; for let but the Immoralist, the Ambitious, the Tenacious, the Persecutor be discouraged; in short, let Vice be under the Displeasure and Correction of the Civil Magistrate, and Virtue or Morality will naturally be encouraged. The encouragement that is here intreated is, that no Man that is a Just, a Temperate and Honest Man, that keeps himself clear of those Sins, that shut Men out of the Kingdom of Heaven, may be either exposed to Contempt, Scorn or Persecution; nor look'd upon as a common Nuisance, nor as the 5th Wheel of a Waggon, but that he may have that Respect

and Preference by the Government, that his virtuous Life hath justly merited; for where a Man of a vicious Life shall have the Smiles of Authority, whilst a Man of better Talents and a good Life, shall be (for God's sake) slighted and despised: This is an apparent discouragement to Morality; and how prejudicial that may be to the State in time, as well as to Youth at present, is not hard to determine: For Young Men will not apply themselves to the Study of Virtue, to recommend themselves for the Service of their Countrey, when they see Examples of Vice before their Eyes under Promotion: But if Virtue were the only Qualification to advance to Honour, Power and Profit, and that none but those that were Educated in her School, should be intrusted with the Charge of the Nation; the Nobility and Gentry, as well as common People, would find themselves obliged to take care of their Posterity, to keep them from every

Vicious

Vicious Path, since that leads to nothing but Destruction both of Body and Soul, here and hereafter. True it is, many good Laws we have in *England*, both against Swearing, Drunkenness, Whoreing and Gaming, &c. now 'tis to no purpose to catch a Porter and make him pay 12 *d.* for an Oath; or send a Kitchen Wench to *Bridewell* for Twelve Months, for having a small Child, whilst Persons of higher Rank shall by practice repeat that every day without Censure, which these poor Persons must suffer for, though but once committed.

But to stop the growth of Impiety, and to retrieve the Nation from that Debauchery it is now fallen into; let every Man that is guilty of any manner of Debauchery or Immorality, be mark'd out as an Enemy to the Peace and Tranquillity of his Country, by being rendered incapable of doing any thing for his

King and Country, till he hath repented, and reformed his Life: And if this method were begun at Court, Vertue would grow in Fashion in the City, and so should Morality be encouraged in all parts of the Country: With these things God Almighty would be well pleased, and pour out his Blessings upon us: With these things the King and his Great Counsel would find abundance of Ease, and Great Wealth, as well as Immortal Honour. With these things the City and Country would be safe, and eased of that continued Vexation and Charge, that the contrary always brings upon them.

True it is, that altho' every One that is a Just and Temperate Man (in short that is a Moral Man) may not be a good Man, for tho' his outside may be without blemish, his inside may be too faulty, and very unclean; yet no good Man can be so
with-

without the Moral Man's outside, nor will those lusty Believers, that pretend to Church Priviledges, and by Presumption (not Faith) lay claim to Promises, find their account, but themselves irreparably mistaken, if there be any Truth in him that said, *First make clean the inside, and the outside will be clean also.*

By outsides we are known one of another, and to one another, and by outsides we make our Judgments of each other, and if the outside is not fair, we are sure we must lay by our Reason to think the inside can be otherwise than foul, and how Consonant that is with Religion, is above declared ; nor can it make any better mixture than Iron and Clay.

Let Men that have clean outsides then be commended and encouraged for Example's sake, and if they are not so, but Hypocrites, God will find

find them out, as he did *Annaias* and *Sapphira*. — But, sure I am, the Government will have the Advantage of that Conformity, if it be no more than Hypocrisie in the *Conformist*.

T H E

Conclusion.

ALL Mankind, that has any Sense of Religion, makes something the Foundation of that Sense. Now that *something* must be either Tradition, Reason, the Holy Scriptures, or Divine Inspiration: But he that has only the first, cannot be said to be a Religious, but Superstitious Man, who cramps his own Reason, as he would others Consciences.

Yet, even such a one ought not to be done by, as he would do by others; for then we should be as bad and worse than he, because of our larger Knowledge.

True

True it is, he ought to be pitied, but not persecuted; and if his Eyes cannot be opened, but he must die as blind as he was Born and Lived, we must e'en think of him as of Idiots, (*viz.*) Leave them to the unseen ways of that God, *who is slow to Anger and of great Kindness.*

Though I highly prefer Reason to Tradition in Religion, yet I cannot think Reason, as commonly understood, a good *Foundation* for Religion.

Nevertheless, he that is moved by no Power Superiour to that of Reason, from Reasonable Considerations must of necessity be Silenced and Routed out of his Traditional Religion: And if Reason conquers Tradition, (as nothing is more certain) it will also discover its own Insufficiency, from whence an earnest Desire and Search will be after something to make good that Defect.

And

And here the Holy Scripture without, and the Holy Spirit within, will come in to the relief of every such Person, to the Impregnating his Understanding and Judgment to *Comprehend*, as well as Desire and Will to *Comply* with what is his Duty to God, his Neighbour, and Himself.

So, that Faith which comes by hearing the Word of God, and is God's Gift, to render us *Christian*, and Reason which is his Gift likewise to make us *Humane*, are like the Husband and Wife, no more to be Twain, but One. Nevertheless the Man has the Preheminence; for *the Head of the Woman is the Man, and the Head of the Man, Christ, &c.* as the Apostle teacheth.

Therefore those that would endeavour to part what God hath so joyned together, bring themselves under the Curse.

But

But Faith, which is the Foundation of Religion (for without it we cannot please God) and Reason, which is Essential to our Humanity, God hath United in One, that so all our Beliefs and Works relating to God, our Neighbours, and our Selves, may appear to be no more than really it is (viz.) our Reasonable Service.

F I N I S.

